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There is but one thing wanting in the work—the immensity of the sea. The little that we see is, to be sure, of rare beauty. The dark, deep, heavy water, in which bodies sink so slowly, and which in times of storm loses its transparency, and almost assumes the appearance; but even this splendid execution does not make up for the want of expression produced by the sky meeting the heaven in every quarter—*pontus, et undique pontus*. In a scene like this, nature should be everything, and man comparatively insignificant.

Géricault was modest as became a gentleman; but he still was fully conscious of his own genius—in other words, his modesty was but one form of his legitimate pride. He repudiated the praises that his friends heaped upon him, but it was because his works did not come up to the standard which he had fixed for himself. The "Wreck of the Medusa" was, in his eyes, but the preface to the great things which he might yet achieve.

In 1820 he brought the painting to England, with the view of exhibiting it, as the event it depicted had here excited as much horror and pity as in France. The enterprise proved successful, and he realised not less than 20,000 francs by it. It was then that the celebrated engraver, Reynolds, reproduced it in an engraving in the dark manner which everyone knows.

When Géricault returned to Paris, his constitution had begun to give way. His letters betrayed a deep feeling of melancholy and *ennui*. His love for his friends seemed to have increased in intensity, and he was continually complaining of the rarity of their visits and their letters. He became almost childishly sensitive, and the least appearance of neglect wounded him deeply. If they were a long while without coming to see him, he wrote them a ceremonious letter, in which his native tenderness was ill concealed by a constrained politeness.

He was destined to fall a victim to his own boldness. He was one day out riding with M. Horace Vernet upon the heights of Montmartre: his horse was fiery and restive (he never rode one that was not so), reared up, plunged violently, and threw him on his face across a heap of stones. A buckle in his trousers was forced into his groin, wounding him severely. He was recovering slowly but satisfactorily, when he lost patience, and rising before he was well, brought on a relapse by his own imprudence. He again mounted on horseback, and attended the races in the Champ de Mars, and while there received a violent shock from a gentleman riding up against him at full speed. He was once more an invalid, and for a year scarcely ever issued from his room; he occupied himself by having the lithographs which he had published in London copied under his own direction. Their printing had been badly executed in England, and he wished to have them reproduced. He still remained dull and melancholy, and was

disquieted in mind by his inability to discharge some debts which he had contracted before his illness. His friends persuaded him to sell some of his paintings, which realised in one day the large sum of 13,000 francs. He was so astonished at this that he could hardly believe it, and accused his friends of having added to it out of their own pockets.

At last his health seemed completely restored, and he returned joyfully to his horse. He executed about this time a series of sketches of oriental costumes. He was about entering upon a still more ambitious work, when his malady suddenly returned, and this time was fatal. He died in his father's house, after a long and painful illness, on the 18th of January, 1824.

At Géricault's death, M. Dedreux Dorcy, fearing lest the "Shipwreck of the Medusa" should pass into strange hands, bought it for 6,000 francs. Some Americans soon afterwards offered triple that sum for it; but M. Dorcy refused to part with it, and soon after sold it to the government for what it had cost him, on condition that it should be placed in the Louvre, where it now hangs.

Géricault was an able sculptor as well as painter. On the walls of his studio he cut figures with his knife worthy of the frieze of the Parthenon. At Evreux there are many of his sculptures, amongst others, a lion in repose, and a bas-relief in wax representing an ancient cavalier. M. Etex has raised a marble mausoleum to his memory. Upon the pedestal, copies of his three principal works are sculptured.—"The Shipwreck of the Medusa" appears in bronze upon the front, and on the sides "The Chassem" and "The Cuirassier." A man of action, fiery, impetuous, and full of manly hardihood, as Géricault was, should have been sculptured upright on his tomb, as David has sculptured Armand Carrel. M. Etex, on the contrary, has represented him tranquilly and pensively reclining. The name of Géricault would always remain as that of an innovator, and yet he has not exaggerated nor gone to extremes. His style was firm, emphasized, and easily distinguishable. Without seeking after common types, he knew how to make use of them, and imprint upon them that character of force which is in reality another kind of nobility. If he saw a drayman's horse passing, he sketched it eagerly in its powerful gait. He followed steadily in the path which David and Vernet had opened up. But, without doubt, if, after contemplating "The Sabines" of David in the Louvre, we turn towards "The Shipwreck of the Medusa," the latter will produce a profound impression on us. When the two masters are placed in contrast, we can perceive an immense difference between them. Between the demigods of the former, and the agitated bodies of the latter, there is a vast gulf; but the intention displayed by both is the same—to enable humanity to infuse poetry into its history, and interest us in its misfortunes.

MURILLO.

It rarely happens that an artist of limited capacity takes much time in assuming his position. Nature having framed him for the comprehension of her beauties, some few aspects alone impart to his mind so vivid an impression of them, that frequently, on emerging from his first studies, the painter masters with a single effort the branch of art by which he hopes to gain eminence, and even the degree of perfection which he may be permitted to attain. On the other hand, an artist endowed with a universal comprehension, capable of making every chord of art vibrate simultaneously, and of thus blending the harmonies of many in himself alone, is never formed so rapidly. His progress is neither so deliberate, so direct, nor so determined. What a length of time does it not take to ripen that individuality which is as yet unconscious of its power, precisely because that power is so multifarious! What crude essays, what groping in the dark, what mixture of styles; what inroads on the domains of others, and how many relapses to originality, before the incipient master feels

his strength, and can exclaim, in the proud language of Correggio, *Anch' io son pittore!* Such was the life of Murillo.

Will it be believed? It is no longer in the convent of the Franciscans at Seville that we must look for the pictures which first led to the celebrity of the Andalusian painter. It is in Paris alone that are now to be found the greater number of those pictures wherein the power of light and shade was so forcibly rendered from a close study of the works of Ribera. Carried off in the artillery waggons of the French generals, some of these paintings, such as the "Franciscan Cook in an Ecstasy," have contributed to enrich the magnificent museum of Marshal Soult; others, such as the "Death of Santa Clara," have constituted the pride of the Aguado gallery. To the second phase of Murillo's talent belongs a "Banditti Scene," in which, from a landscape background, vigorously painted, are relieved the figures of a monk and a half-naked robber into whose clutches he has fallen. The whole is executed in the manner of Spagnoletto; as well as a "Flight

of the Holy Family into Egypt," which represents the infant Jesus affectionately folded in the arms of his mother on the back of the humble quadruped he afterwards chose for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, while Joseph the carpenter, leading the animal by the bridle, hastens forward through the shades of night.

In a country like Spain, Murillo must have easily won the love of the masses. He was essentially endowed with all that could please the Spaniards. Differing in that respect from Velasquez, who portrayed by preference the nobler attributes of the national character, he devoted himself to the illustration of its more vulgar qualities, and that of the ordinary and general habits and manners of the people, with all the contrasts which they offer in a nation so profoundly catholic. He could paint the sacred fervour of the devotee, or the ecstasy of the monkish enthusiast, as well as the ragged-

trary, stops; he is struck with the effect produced by the sunbeam which has penetrated through the opening and heightened the tone of the urchin's rags. He finds the attitude artless, and the subject picturesque; the accident of light is vivid, piquant, and warm, and the head in good relief. In one moment the painter has sketched his chance model, if not on paper, at least in his mind's eye, and on returning to his studio he paints that little gem of observation, so broad in its simplicity of light and shade, which is now so much admired at the Louvre under the title of the "Youthful Mendicant." Nor has he forgotten any of the accessories; neither the simple pitcher of water, nor the old basket in which some fruit appears, nor the shrimps scattered on the table-cloth—the bare earth; the preparations for, or leavings of, a frugal repast, the beginning and end of which are pretty much alike. The head is full of character; the fragments of the vest are



WRECK OF THE MEDUSA.—FROM A PAINTING BY GERICAULT.

ness of the proud mendicant, or the abject suffering of Job. Being himself a man of deep devotion, he frequently went to pray for whole hours in his own parochial church, and was sure to remark after service such beauties as might peep through their window-blinds to attract notice. As a catholic, Murillo was at once worldly and devout; as a Christian, he bore an equal love to all human creatures, whether they were ill made or elegantly formed, disfigured by poverty or set off by luxury, filthy to excess, or adorned like queens and radiant as Seraphim. Behold him issuing from the cloister of the Franciscans, where he has been painting an apparition of angels, who might be said to be arrayed in robes of light! at the corner of the first street he perceives through a window an urchin with a shaven head squatting against a Gothic ruin, busily engaged in ridding himself of some of those insinuating friends, whose society is anything but a luxury. Any other person would have averted his gaze, but Murillo, on the con-

touched with boldness, for no one can properly paint rags; the flesh is modelled with care; the rough and sunburnt skin, and the callous soles of the feet, sufficiently indicate the truant habits of the vagabond, and the horror of work and clean water. Thus has Murillo involuntarily characterised the Spanish people by the single figure of this urchin, equally free from care and trouble, who, after unconsciously sitting for his portrait, proudly holds up his head, and is at least as abstemious as he is idle. The picture itself is really a curious and agreeable object to look at.

That talent which served to make Murillo the most popular painter of Spain, had already brought him so much into notice, that in a short time he acquired fortune enough to be deemed worthy of espousing a lady of distinction (*una persona de conveniencias*) of the city of Pílas, Donna Beatrix de Cabrera y Sotomayor. This marriage took place in 1648, from which time he found his fame rapidly increase, at the same time that

he felt his genius more fully develop itself. The originality of the painter at length threw off the shackles of imitation. Vandyck, Ribera, Titian, and even Velasquez, all the models at first so ingeniously imitated, faded by degrees from the memory of their admirer, and on their vanished traces arose a new artist, a master in his turn, who now displayed a character, a stamp, and a signature of his own; this was Esteban Murillo.

This was his third and last transformation. The violent light and shade, which he had borrowed from Ribera, sensibly softened and gained in transparency what it lost in force; his touch grew more mellow; his style became fixed, and nothing remained to him of the great Velasquez but the art of graduating his tints to *paint the air*, as finely expressed by Moratin.

not anxious to have the image of its patron saint from the hand of Murillo; nor was there a high altar of a cathedral, or a chapel of renown, which was not reserved for one or other of the innumerable "Conceptions," as rapidly composed by Murillo as they were varied in character. It might be almost said that this striking miracle continually enlightened his imagination. The rapt Virgin always appeared to him clothed in blue and white, the invariable apparel which, doubtless, in the thoughts of the painter combined the two colours of purity and heaven. As to the Cherubim with which he surrounded her, those tender zephyrs of the Christian mythology charm in a thousand different ways, always graceful and artless, now playing with the skirts and folds of the flowing drapery, now merely showing their winged



THE BEGGAR BOY.—FROM A PAINTING BY MURILLO.

He further preserved that excellent gray tone of his which generally serves as a background to the portraits of Velasquez, in which the gravity of the personages habited in black combines so harmoniously with those cool and tranquil tints, in which still lingers that glow which makes the coldest tones of Spain approach even the warm hues of northern countries.

In spite of the fierce rivalry of Valdés Leal, and the jealousy of Herrera the younger, Murillo ascended without difficulty to the first position in Seville. People flocked to him from all parts to give him commissions for Virgins, for monks praying, for Saviours, and other devotional subjects—so truly did he paint them in accordance with the impassioned feelings of the Spaniards. There was not a community of Capuchins, of Augustins, of Franciscans, that was

heads swimming in floods of light. It seems almost as if, when he had to represent the Virgin apprised by the angel of the mysteries of her future maternity, the Spanish painter fell back into naturalism, and even produced a powerful effect by the contrast between terrestrial individualities and the ideal signs and personages sent from on high. We see frequently in Murillo's "Annunciations" the accessories of domestic life, the workbag, the thimble, and the scissors upon the linen heaped up in the humble basket. It was not undesignedly that the Andalusian painter, avoiding the lofty style of Raphael and the Italian catholics, exhibits to us in an humble workwoman the Virgin chosen as the accepted medium for the incarnation of Deity.

When a stranger arrives at Seville, he is immediately con-

ducted to the cathedral; that he may be shown the numerous paintings of Murillo, which the chapter is so justly proud of possessing. At the back of the high altar he is called upon to admire a "Nativity of Our Lady," admirable for the sweetness of the tints, its quiet shadows, and its charming tone of colour, *hermoso colorido*. The traveller, after this, is conducted into the grand sacristy, where glitter the famous pictures of St. Leander and St. Isidore, in pontifical habits. He is then stopped at one of the lateral chapels before a "Repose in Egypt," painted with the freest and most masterly handling, and resembling a Velasquez from its brilliant effect. Finally, to raise the admiration of the visitor to the pitch of enthusiasm, they unfold to his gaze the "Saint Anthony of Padua," and on contemplating this matchless and unapproachable masterpiece, the stranger, as yet but little familiarised with the beauties of Spanish painting, remains in rapt ecstasy like the Cenobite in the picture. In a gloomy cell the infant Jesus suddenly appears to Saint Anthony, in the midst of a dazzling glory; and the pious hermit, on his knees, enlightened by the apparition, throws up his arms in an indescribable transport of love for the Deity resplendent with light and beauty, towards whom he stretches out his arms as for a loving embrace. Never was the force of passionate expression carried beyond this point by any painter, nor ever was there produced, with brush and colours, skies more transparent or features of more seraphic sweetness. The management of the *chiaro-oscuro* is no less astonishing here than the faith of the visionary monk. It is inconceivable how the painter has been able, by the mere power of light and shade, to obtain so luminous an effect, and by what infinite gradation of treatment he has been able to pass from the intensity of the sun's rays to the peaceful obscurity of the hermit's cell.

But before quitting the cathedral of Seville, there remains to be seen the chapter house, the works of which were directed by Murillo in 1667 and 1668. Provided the cicerone be a well-informed canon—and some may yet be found among the chapter—he will not fail to assert, with a feeling of becoming pride, that for the "Saint Anthony of Padua" the artist received 10,000 reals, equal to 80,000 at the present day; and as the life of the great painter of Seville is well known in that city rather by tradition than by reading the works of Palomino, the traveller will learn, on the subject of the beautiful "Conception" painted for the dome of the Franciscans, the history of the curious contest which took place between Murillo and the reverend fathers. A picture destined always to be seen at a distance, must be conceived and treated with the broad style suited to decoration. It must be drawn squarely, and touched with great vigour. In putting in his contrasts roughly, the painter confides to distance the care of restoring them to their just proportions; and if he handles his colours with rude ability, he calculates on the gradations of aerial perspective to produce an appropriate harmony. Murillo had been careful not to forget the principles which he had occasionally seen so well applied in the learned practice of Velasquez. When the holy fathers had a close view of what they should only see at a distance, they exclaimed against the

coarseness of a painting that seemed all a mass of confusion, and which they doubtless thought was painted with the handle of the brush. They refused to receive it, in short; but the artist, before he carried away his picture, demanded and obtained leave to raise it for a moment to its proper position. In proportion as the canvas ascended, the figures became disentangled, the outlines softened by little and little, and the colours mingled; that which before was careless appeared finished, what was harsh became soft, and when the canvas reached its proper height, the most perfect harmony enchanted every eye. The good Franciscans then blushed at their ignorance; and to appease the irritated artist, who now expressed his intention of carrying away his work, they were compelled to offer him double the price originally agreed upon.

A happy life was that of Murillo! It was not characterised, it is true, by any of those romantic incidents which are the charm and the torment of our hearts; the sight of some pictures of Vandyck, a visit to Velasquez,—such were the two great events of that artistic life in which neither idleness nor weariness found a place. In a city peopled with monks, with picturesque mendicants, and enthusiastic devotees, in a city filled with mysterious churches, lit up, as Lafontaine would say, by the eyes of Andalusian beauties, Murillo passed his time in copying the inhabitants of the earth and inventing those of heaven. His whole world was summed up in the city of Seville. On the road on which he had to traverse, from the parish of Santa Cruz, in which he resided, to the cathedral of Seville, or else to the convent of the Capuchins outside the walls, he lost nothing that occurred to attract his notice. If he met the licentiates Alonzo Herrera and Juan Lopez y Talavan, he was struck with their fine heads, and he introduced them under the names of Saint Leander and of Saint Isidore into some devotional picture. Without the necessity of travelling, or of crossing the seas, he could handle a thousand different subjects, and paint in every branch of the art,—landscapes, flowers, sea-pieces, portraits, history, and miracles; miserable humanity cowering on the pavement, and beatified mortals wafted through the regions of Paradise. The soul and the body, visionary reverie and gross materialism, self-denial and voluptuous enjoyment, he observed all; he saw in creation all its phases, in social life its contrasts of nobleness and baseness, and in the heart of man he could read all its hidden stores of weakness, of grandeur and of love.

What Raphael Mengs said of the figures of Velasquez may be applied to the majority of Murillo's compositions,—they seem to be created by a simple act of volition. We can scarcely imagine that the painter has conceived them otherwise; and this perfect nature, with all its merit, has also some disadvantages. With Velasquez, for instance, it is seldom that the arrangement of a portrait or the composition of an historical picture has not the zest of freshness united with startling truth. With Murillo the conception is so prompt, that art has not had time to intervene. We might be almost tempted to imagine that the picture composed itself, and to look upon it as a fortuitous piece of accident.

EUSTACE LE SUEUR.

THERE are few painters who have achieved so much and been known to fame, in this country at least, as Eustache Le Sueur, which must be a matter of wonder to any one who remembers how readily any man, but particularly an artist, can become popular when the story of his life has any tinge of romance in it. About Le Sueur's there was so much that one incident in it has furnished a rich mine of materials to French novelists.

He was the son of a sculptor, and was placed at an early age in the studio of the famous old French painter, Simon Vouet, *premier peintre du roi*, who is considered the father of French art. While here he gave evidence of a very precocious talent, by executing a number of illustrations for a work entitled "The Dreams of Poliphilus," written by a Franciscan monk of the fifteenth century, and then greatly admired, because no

one understood it. Very likely neither did Le Sueur, but he fancied he did, and this answered his purpose quite as well—even better, as it left him free scope for his imagination. His paintings were accordingly distinguished by great grace and liveliness, but still displayed something of that solemn grandeur and severe simplicity which have rendered his subsequent works so famous. And now comes the episode in his career which threw over his genius a melancholy cast, and in all likelihood inclined him to employ it almost exclusively upon religious subjects.

Louis XIII. about this time paid a visit to the celebrated Mademoiselle La Fayette at the Convent of the Visitation, and presented the sisterhood with a large sum to be spent in the decoration of their chapel—the chapel of Holy Mary. Vouet,